USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

IOWA CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

April/May 2017

BRAD HARRISON LEAVES A LASTING LEGACY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION WEEK FULL OF LIFE

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov

Dallas County Pond
Photo by Jason Johnson

WHAT'S INSIDE?

a Message from the State Conservationist

Kurt Simon,
State Conservationist

Land Stewardship Vital to Future of Agriculture

Earlier this month I met our new Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, along with representatives from Iowa such as Senators Charles Grassley and Joni Ernst and Congressman Steve King, at a family farm in Nevada (Iowa).

In a meeting with Secretary Perdue our representative asked him questions about his vision for the Department, and what that means for Iowa agriculture. I was impressed and encouraged with what he said. Following are some takeaways from that meeting and his public speech, in reference to NRCS:

- Secretary Perdue believes that land stewardship is very important, and vital to the future of agriculture. When he was growing up on the farm in Georgia, he mentioned his family worked with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to install ponds and waterways.
- He said soil and water conservation were core to his upbringing in a farm family. He said his father gave him a stewardship ethic by making conservation investments. Perdue wants our local staffs to help landowners "leave the land better than you found it."
- Perdue says NRCS offices were once more a part of the local community, and that we have gotten away from that. "We've got to get our groove back," he said.
- Another point he made specifically about NRCS is the importance of streamlining programs. When asked by a local farmer about simplifying the program application process, he replied, "I'm on it!"

IOWA CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Current Developments is a product of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Des Moines, Iowa, published bimonthly by the Iowa NRCS Public Affairs Staff in cooperation with NRCS and partner agency employees from across the state.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS STORIES AND PHOTOS

Please submit your Current Developments story ideas and photos to State Public Affairs Specialist Laura Crowell at laura.crowell@ia.usda.gov. Past issues can be found at www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/ia/people/employees/?cid=nrcs142p2_008273

@IowaNRCS

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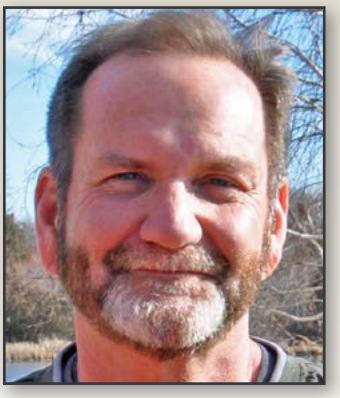
BRAD HARRISON: HIS LEGACY WON'T SOON BE FORGOTTEN



Dallas County District Conservationist Brad Harrison lost his 18-month battle with cancer on April 10.

Brad, 58, worked for NRCS for 36 years. He was a passionate and creative conservationist, who never gave up on a good idea for selling conservation.

Even if you never met Brad, you're probably familiar with the NRCS tag line: Helping People Help the Land. Brad wrote this NRCS tag line and successfully pitched his idea to former Chief Bruce Knight.

In addition to the national NRCS tag line, two of these many ideas included:

» **A soil health rap song and music video called:** Don't Treat it Like Dirt. Because of Brad's passionate and persistent enthusiasm, he successfully recruited a team of talented volunteers who performed, recorded, produced and wrote the music for his rap lyrics. Every person donated their time and resources to his project. The video has been viewed nearly 7,500 times on YouTube and downloaded by teachers around the country.

» **A team of natural resource conservation superheroes called The Whobuddies.** After creating the Whobuddies concept, Brad reached out to countless movie production companies and animation studios to see if they could help bring his band of six owl superheroes to life. After receiving at least one "cease and desist" letter from a well-known animation studio, which sternly, yet politely asked Brad to stop contacting them, he didn't give up. He redirected his energies, and found his own illustrator to give Bubo, Otus, Tyto, Strix, Ninox and Asio their visual personalities. (Always the educator, he named the characters after the actual genus name of each owl species.) Iowa NRCS is currently working with the same illustrator to develop the fourth Whobuddies comic book and video this year. The Whobuddies resources have been shared with school children all across the United States.

Brad was a tireless advocate of the soil, launching his newest soil health promotion idea just last month. Called the "1% Challenge", his local program encourages farmers to work towards a 1 percent increase in soil organic matter through soil health practices.

But he was much more than a persistent conservation promoter. Brad was a seasoned and skilled conservation planner, a trusted resource for local farmers and a selfless mentor to young NRCS employees. He felt strongly that getting out in the field and developing a trusting relationship with farmers was key to getting conservation on the land.

He was our kind, generous and encouraging friend.

Brad's daughter Megan wrote, "My dad was the hardest working man I've ever known and an amazing husband, father, son, brother, grandpa and friend. He had the best attitude, even in his weakest moments. My hope is that he is never forgotten and always honored for all that he accomplished in his beautiful life."

This is our hope too.

(Brad Harrison Obituary)

BACK IN THE DAY

July 14, 1937

Ed Kurth Farm, Farmersburg, Iowa
Corn planted on the contour between strips of barley in stocks (left) and oats (right).

2017: IOWA NRCS CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CRAC)

Members of the Iowa NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) met at the State Office in May. This year's representatives include: **(Back Row, L-R)** Nichole Baxter, Shaffer Ridgeway, Louis Moran, Mark Schutt, William Peek, Anand Hase, and Lane Collins. **(Middle Row, L-R):** Sheila Blomme, Melissa Wynn, Ava Haun, Laura Crowell, Nichole Williams, and Jaia Fischer. **(Front Row, L-R):** Jean Sandstrom and Rick Bednarek.

(Not Pictured: Tamara Buitenwerf, Tom Duvel, Abby Beltz, Kurt Simon, Lori Derringer, Jon Hubbert and Clare Lindahl)

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Erika Justiniano-Velez

Erika Justiniano-Velez

Title: Agricultural Engineer, Sioux City

College Education:

» Bachelor's Degree: Civil Engineering, 2009, University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez

NRCS Career

» 2010-11 - WAE, Mobile, Alabama
» 2011-12 - Soil Conservation Technician, Evergreen, Alabama
» 2012-17 - Agricultural Engineer, Alabama (West Area)
» 2017-Present - Agricultural Engineer, Sioux City

How Did You Become Interested in Conservation?

In 2007, while studying Civil Engineering, I was given the opportunity to do an internship with the USGS National Center in Reston, VA. During that summer I got to survey the banks of the Roanoke River for a bank erosion study, collect vegetation samples in the Potomac River, process those in a lab to obtain experimental data, map that data using ArcGIS for a study of sub-aquatic vegetation. I worked with biologists, hydrologists, geologist, and environmental engineers and was captivated by their passion for the environment and their commitment to their work. That is when I became interested in natural resources, their study and conservation.

What is your favorite part about working for NRCS?

It is tough to choose just one part. I would say my favorite part is working with an interdisciplinary team that shares a passion for what we do and we combine our education and experiences to help private landowners to conserve their natural resources to protect their farming operation but also to benefit our environment.

What are you most looking forward to in your new position?

I'm excited to get into water quality, I'll be helping the state engineers in developing training and guidance for edge of field engineering practices.

Other Interests

My husband Luis (Cruz-Arroyo) and I have a daughter, Olivia, and she is a year old, so that is my world right now. We enjoy family time and seeing her grow and express herself. Now that spring is here we are exploring the outdoors and our new town. We're very happy to be here.

Luis is the new Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Area 1.

SPOTLIGHT VIDEO

In Remembrance of Brad Harrison: Don't Treat It Like Dirt

It took several years to accomplish, but former Dallas County District Conservationist Brad Harrison made his music video! After putting pen to paper for his song, "Don't Treat It Like Dirt," it took him years to find musicians, vocalists, a recording studio, videographers, and video editors to finish his idea. But in 2014, he accomplished his goal. Check out the infamous video by clicking the image at right.

Brad passed away in April after battling cancer for 18 months. His passion, creativity, and out-of-box ideas will truly be missed!

FREE IMAGES: SARE PROVIDES SOIL HEALTH IMAGES

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education's Library of Cover Crop and Soil Health Images is now available to show producers how cover crops can work on their farms. The collection includes over 1,500 photos and illustrations organized into 10 galleries. A soil health gallery features high-resolution illustrations compiled in a set of 20 PowerPoint slides for use in presentations. The collection also includes five complete PowerPoint presentations that illustrate the benefits of incorporating cover crops into cropping systems. These cover crop materials are provided for free to use in non-commercial agriculture and conservation work, provided that proper attribution is used.

EROSION: TREAT THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SYMPTOMS

By Kacey Birchmier, Successful Farming

Beauty and the beast. A tale as old as time. This story has nothing to do with love. It's all about erosion and what can be done to transform overworked, abused soil into healthy, productive soil teeming with life.

The situation is grim across the Midwest. Soil is eroding around a rate of 5 tons per acre per year, with severe cases losing closer to 100 tons per acre, says Jerry Hatfield, director of the USDA-ARS National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment located in Ames, Iowa. These numbers are above the rates of soil restoration, so soil will continue to be lost.

"Erosion rates are dependent upon the year," says Hatfield. "It's all rainfall driven."

Intense weather events in the spring are becoming the norm across the Midwest. There is more precipitation in the spring – a time of year with little or no crop to use that water, says Hatfield.

Since there's no vegetation to use the water or break up the raindrop energy, it leads to increased runoff and erosion, causing concern over how much erosion rates will increase across the Midwest. You battle this beast yearly. As of January 2017, 23.5 million acres were reportedly enrolled in the CRP across the U.S. Voluntary participation has helped to improve water quality and reduce soil erosion.

But is it enough? "You protect land from erosion and reduce the amount of sediment you put into streams with these practices," says Chad Watts, executive director of the Conservation Technology Information Center in West Lafayette, Indiana.

The bottom line: You need less soil disturbance and more residue and cover crops.

"Your soil is more than just the medium in which you grow plants," says Watts. "The downfall of many civilizations was when they degraded their soil to the point that it was no longer productive. When soil degrades to the point of no return, that's when civilizations begin to fail. It behooves you to protect your soil."

THE CURSE

The practice of tillage has conservationists exasperated.

"There is no agronomic or economic reason for tillage to be justifiable anymore," says Doug Peterson, NRCS Iowa and Missouri regional soil health specialist. "It destroys everything that restores soil function."

"The practice of tillage is more ingrained in most people than their religion," he says.

After all, passed down from generation to generation was the thought that tillage was required to make soil function, but that is not the case. Instead, tillage causes a loss in aggregate stability, explains Peterson. Root exudate in the soil act like glue and hold together soil particles. Erosion occurs when one piece of soil breaks loose from another aggregate.

Sediment loss, nutrient loss, and water availability are the main conservation concerns for Hatfield. "We've induced more and more field variability over time," he says.

"If you have good root exudate coming from year-round plant roots and a healthy biology, you have a better aggregated soil," says Peterson.

The slake test is a good visual demonstration of what is happening in the field. The slake test consists of two clear containers full of water. A clod of soil from a tilled field is placed in one container, while a clod from a no-till field is placed in the other.

"The tilled soil dissolves rapidly," says Peterson. "In the presence of rain, without the glues or exudate, the soil particles in the aggregates break loose, and they are very susceptible to erosion."

That's not the case for the no-till field, which remains intact. A field with poor soil health doesn't allow for as much water infiltration as a healthy soil. Maintaining soil structure is important to help with infiltration, explains Hatfield.

"It's not how much rain you get in the rain gauge that matters; it's how much you get in the soil. Your job should be determining ways you can capture rain and store it better," says Hatfield.

It's not just a problem with water – there's an issue with oxygen, as well.

There is no agronomic or economic reason for tillage to be justifiable anymore, says Doug Peterson.

"Those roots growing in the soil are really oxygen-dependent," says Hatfield.

Having non-functioning soil biology is akin to having COPD. The soil needs to have an oxygen exchange – that's limited in soil without a healthy biology.

IT'S A BEAST

You see these areas with washes get filled in by tillage. The answer to this type of erosion is to manage water better, explains Watts.

Continued on next page...

EROSION: TREAT THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SYMPTOMS CONT...

The ideal system is a continual no-till with cover crops, which builds soil aggregates and allows more air and water movement through the soil.

The following three steps will help you manage your soil for the future:

1. Adjust your strategy. Leave residue. Material left on the soil surface is an impediment to water movement. Cover crops or a grass waterway help deflect that water, resulting in more infiltration and less runoff.

Gully erosion, a concentrated flow of water that cuts deep channels, is different from other types of erosion because you notice it right away. Other types don't appear to be a significant problem – yet, looks can be deceiving. Sheet erosion (the uniform removal of soil in thin layers by raindrops and overland flow) and rill erosion (the removal of soil by concentrated water through small channels) are the types that cause the most soil loss.

"If you lose .10 inch of soil a year, you don't notice it," says Watts. "You're losing more than you think. A tenth of an inch over 40 acres adds up – it's just less noticeable."

Don't think this is affecting you? Losing the thickness of one sheet of paper across an acre is equivalent to losing 5 tons of soil, says Peterson. If you have perfectly clear water in your field after a rain event, then you didn't have much sheet erosion, he explains.

2. Fix it right. Available programs with cost sharing have made it easier to fix issues, says Watts. Over the years, farmers have done a pretty good job addressing the critical areas with waterways. "For example, if you get a gully, you don't get a lot growing. You're money ahead to fix it and fix it right rather than try to farm with it," he says.

Growers are certainly headed in the right direction. "Even more than 10 years ago, protecting your soil is part of the conversation. As you talk about being sustainable, soil has to be part of that conversation," Watts says.

When considering conservation practices, it's key to think of the context of how it fits into your production system.

There's a direct tie between conservation and your production system. There are enough options within conservation that you can protect soil while being productive and profitable, says Watts.

3. Treat the problem, not the symptoms. An emphasis has been placed on buffers in past years, but they should be considered the last line of defense.

"If you have water, it's going to move some soil," says Watts. "Some movement is inevitable."
In-field management should be the answer instead of relying on capturing soil, nutrients, and water leaving the field.

"Edge-of-field practices (such as buffers) slow down water movement and stop those sediment and nutrient runoffs before they get too far," says Watts. While valuable practices, they only treat symptoms – not the problem – and should only be half of the system.

"When you get to the point where you have a big gully, you need to pinpoint why you can't fill it in with tillage," explains Watts. "Look up the hill to see what's happening."

In-field management gives you an opportunity to address the problem. "The beauty is that there is an opportunity to tie conservation practices to production," says Watts. "Cover crops build organic matter, and there are production benefits that go along with building organic matter."

THE BEAUTY OF TRANSFORMATION

The conversation needs to move from no-till to never-till. "Any time you make a tillage pass, you begin to break down aggregates," says Peterson.

Water infiltrates the pore spaces in the aggregates, and tillage passes destroy those spaces in the aggregates. Ultimately, this destroys the ability of the water to infiltrate the soil. That's not all it harms. It also slashes the earthworm habitat.

"The more active the biology, the more you're going to get out of the system," says Peterson.

Take nutrient cycling, for example. In a tilled environment, only about 30% to 50% of nutrients make it into the plant, says Peterson. However, with no-till, 70% to 90% of nutrients will be accessed by the plant. This may improve yield, and it lowers the risk of nutrient loss.

Producers have installed a lot of practices without understanding that they're treating only symptoms of the problem instead of the root cause, says Peterson.

The goal of a bioreactor is to trap nitrates that leave the field and prevent them from going into a river or stream. Even if it's just $10 to $30 per acre in nitrates leaving the field, that's a $10 to $30 investment going underutilized because the soil couldn't hold the nutrients. It's an investment you can't get back, he says.

"Historically, the problem hasn't been understood. The soil wasn't functioning properly. Those edge-of-field practices may function really well, but it's still costing you," he says.

Across the Midwest, soil erodes around a rate of 5 tons per acre per year with severe cases losing closer to 100 tons per acre per year.

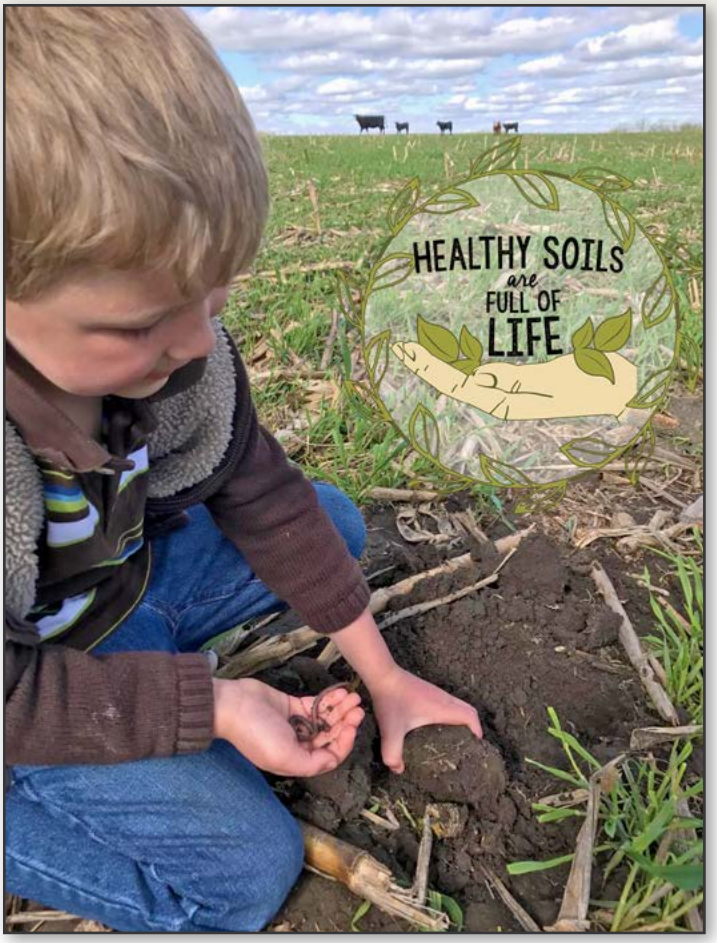
Cover crops combined with no-till could be the answer. Cover crops add organic matter to the soil, while no-till builds aggregate stability, he says. "Neither practice is as effective by itself."

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION WEEK: #HEALTHYSOILSAREFULLOFLIFE

Iowa NRCS and our conservation partners in Iowa and across the Nation celebrated Soil and Water Conservation Week, April 30-May 7, by promoting soil health through social media.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) developed this year's theme: Healthy Soils are Full of Life. Soil conservationists and farmers from across Iowa were asked to submit images of people holding healthy, living soil in their hands.

Below are samples of images Iowa NRCS tweeted that week:



APRIL 22, 2017 EarthDAY

Allamakee County
The Postville Cora B Darling Elementary School hosted a career day that aligned with Earth Day. Sara Berges, SWCD Project Coordinator, and Soil Conservationist Megan Waechter presented to 48 students, ranging from grades K-5.

They talked about soil properties, soil health, and water quality. "We started with the basics of soil. What are the components? How is it created? How long does it take to form?" said Waechter.

They also talked about watersheds, and used the Enviroscape diorama to illustration how pollutants and soil reach our streams and lakes when it rains. "We talked about the importance of having living plants in the ground all year long. We demonstrated this using the tabletop rainfall simulator comparing soil with grass growing to bare ground. We then talked about how we work with farmers to plant cover crops on their cropland and gave them all a cup of soil and rye grass seeds to take home and watch grow," said Waechter.

Black Hawk County
NRCS and Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District presented information to a geology class from Waterloo West High School learning about water quality and soil health. They met at George With State Park on April 25.

National Arbor Day

Lorne Miller, District Conservationist for the Crawford-Ida Management Unit, goes to the OA-BCIG and Ridgeview Schools 5th Grade class every Arbor Day. He visits with the students on the importance of trees, and Arbor Day and gives a demonstration on properly planting trees. The Ida County Pheasants Forever Chapter provides a tree to every student. This year 128 students received a Red Maple Tree on Arbor Day, April 28.

FIELD DAY: LEARNING ABOUT FIRST WAPELLO CO. BIOREACTOR

The Cedar Creek Partnership Water Quality Initiative (WQI) Watershed Project held a bioreactor field day at Bert Giltner's Farm southeast of Hedrick last month. The well attended event featured presenters Greg Brenneman (ISU Extension), Stephanie Allgood (NRCS), and Will Myers (IDALS). Participants learned how bioreactors work and about the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy and the Iowa Water Quality Initiative. The event took place at the in-progress construction site of the first bioreactor to be installed in the watershed and in Wapello County; speakers discussed the benefits and specific details about the site. The field day was sponsored by Iowa Corn Growers Association.

A bioreactor is a buried trench filled with a carbon source, commonly wood chips. The wood chips provide a food source for microorganisms. When tile water (excess water removed from below the soil surface) is diverted into the trench, the microorganisms are able to break down nitrate in the water and release it as harmless nitrogen gas into the atmosphere. This practice has the potential to reduce nitrates by 43 percent.

Bioreactors are suitable for many locations and can be installed in conjunction with existing and new tile. Most current bioreactor designs are successful at reducing the amount of nitrate in drainage areas from 30 to 80 acres. To date, most bioreactors in Iowa are about 100 to 120 feet long and 10 to 25 feet wide. Typically, no land is taken out of production for a bioreactor. Because bioreactors tend to have an orientation that is long and narrow, they fit well in edge-of-field buffer strips and grassed areas. The lifespan of a bioreactor is estimated to be 15 to 20 years, after which the wood chips would be replaced to continue effectively treating water.

21ST IOWA ENVIROTHON: SOUTHWEST VALLEY FFA WINS

Fifteen high school teams competed at the 21st Annual Iowa Envirothon State Competition at Springbrook State Park in Guthrie Center on April 24. This year's state winner was Southwest Valley FFA from Corning. They qualified for the National Conservation Foundation - Envirothon Competition July 23 – 29, 2017 at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Envirothon is a team competition for high school students testing their knowledge of natural resources. In the field and classroom, teams of five students are challenged to use their knowledge and critical thinking skills to conduct hands-on investigations, solve real-life scenarios and answer written questions covering five categories: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and Current Environmental Issues.

The 2017 Iowa Envirothon Runner-Up was Maquoketa FFA 1. The following teams were this year's first place category winners:

» Marshalltown High School in Aquatics

» Southwest Valley FFA & La Porte-Dysart FFA (tied) in Forestry
» Southwest Valley FFA in Soils
» Southwest Valley FFA in Wildlife
» Bellevue FFA White in Current Issue
» Decorah Painted Turtles in the Oral Presentation

The Iowa Envirothon is hosted by Conservation Districts of Iowa.

NRCS OUTREACH: CELEBRATING LGBTQ YOUTH

NRCS had a successful outreach booth at this year's Governor's Conference for LGBTQ Youth, April 11, in Des Moines. With about 1,200 students, teachers, guidance counselors and others interested in LGBTQ safety and equality in attendance, there were plenty of people interested in Pathways internships, volunteer opportunities, career options and ways to help conserve our natural resources.

The conference was also a great learning opportunity for the NRCSers staffing the booth (Laura Crowell, State Public Affairs Officer; Kathy Woida, State Geologist; and Jean Sandstrom, Civil Engineer and LGBT SEPM). The day was filled with workshops on leadership, safety, and support systems for LGBTQ youth, along with topics about legislative issues and current events relevant to the LGBTQ community. Speakers included Brandon Wolf, a survivor of the Pulse shooting in Orlando last year; Dot-Marie Jones,

A group of students and teachers support their high school GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) as they look through literature at the NRCS booth with Jean Sandstrom.

Emmy-nominated actress from the hit TV show, Glee; Aydian Dowling, owner of Point 5cc Clothing and transgender activist from New York; and Justin Johnson, a dancer and drag performer (stage name Alyssa Edwards) from Texas, among many others.

A common theme among the speakers was their encouragement to the youth in attendance to be true to themselves, love themselves, and follow their dreams.

MAY: AMERICAN WETLANDS MONTH

Prior to European settlement wetlands made up about 11 percent (or 4 million acres) of the Iowa landscape. Wetlands were not only prevalent in the Prairie Pothole region of north central Iowa, they were part of every watershed in the state. Today, however, 95 percent of Iowa wetlands have been drained.

WHY WERE WETLANDS DRAINED?

A growing U.S. population, public health concerns, and economic development led to conversion of the majority of Iowa's historic wetlands in the 20th Century.

Similar to the rich soils formed under native prairie grasslands, wetland soils, if drained, are highly productive and were quickly assimilated into Iowa's agricultural land base. Conversion however, was not without risk. Even with improved drainage, on some acres, farmers were lucky to get a crop one or two out of every five years. This, when coupled with a greater understanding of the ecological function and benefits of wetlands, led to the formulation of programs that would assist with retiring and restoring these problematic acres in the early 1990s.

WETLAND BENEFITS

Wetlands offer a diverse, healthy environment – where the flow of water, the recycling of nutrients, and the energy of the sun meet to produce a unique ecosystem.

Water loving plants and animals flourish in wetlands, standing water and saturated soils. Wetlands protect biodiversity, housing the majority of Iowa's endangered species. More than 10,000 invertebrate species are adapted to life in freshwater wetlands nationally.

Wetlands are valuable for people, too. They filter pollutants from upland runoff, help control flooding, and maintain populations of wildlife for recreational activities like hunting and birdwatching.

Other wetland benefits:

- **Water Quality Improvement –** Wetlands provide natural pollution control by removing excess agricultural chemicals, such as pesticides and fertilizers, from surface waters.
- **Water Supply –** Wetlands are reservoirs for rainwater and runoff. They reduce peak water flow after heavy storms, and recharge groundwater supplies as they release water into the ground.
- **Wildlife Habitat –** Waterfowl, birds and other wildlife depend on wetland habitat for breeding, nesting, and feeding.
- **Sediment Delivery Reduction –** Wetlands filter and collect sediment from runoff water, helping to reduce sedimentation in lakes and reservoirs.
- **Farm Economics –** Farming frequently flooded and saturated, or poorly drained areas, can be expensive. The best economic choice may be to set aside a wet area as a wetland.

AND THE THUNDER ROLLS: JUNE IS LIGHTNING AWARENESS MONTH

With all of the work we do outside, it is important to be aware of thunderstorms in the area, and how to respond if there is a risk of lightning.

Below are some lightning safety tips, courtesy of the National Weather Service:

Lightning: What You Need to Know

» *NO PLACE* outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area!!
» If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
» When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter: a substantial building with electricity or plumbing or an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle with windows up.
» Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

Indoor Lightning Safety

» Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity.
» Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
» Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
» Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.

Last Resort Outdoor Risk Reduction Tips

If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby the following actions may reduce your risk:

» Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks
» Never lie flat on the ground
» Never shelter under an isolated tree
» Never use a cliff or rocky overhang for shelter
» Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water
» Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.)

Changes In
IOWA NRCS PERSONNEL

NAME	TITLE	NATURE OF ACTION	EFFECTIVE DATE	LOCATION
Kaufmann, Lindsey	Student Trainee	Returned for Summer	3/5/17	Atlantic
Dick, Nathan	Agricultural Engineer	Student Converted to Full-Time	3/19/17	Sioux City
Grube, Derek	Student Trainee	Returned for Summer	3/19/17	West Union
Bucklin, John	Resource Conservationist	Retirement	3/31/17	Area 3
Jerkins, Stephen	Soil Conservation Technician	Retirement	3/31/17	Iowa City
Reynolds, Kevin	District Conservationist	Retirement	4/1/17	Leon
Harrison, Brad	District Conservationist	Deceased	4/10/17	Adel
Mott, Paula	Soil Conservation Technician	Resignation	4/28/17	Hampton
Sunderman, Darcy	Student Trainee	New Student	4/30/17	Clarinda
Truitt, Ashley	Student Trainee	New Student	4/30/17	Storm Lake
McGrew, Monica	Soil Conservationist	Resignation	5/5/17	Leon
Frana, Matthew	Soil Conservationist	Resignation	5/12/17	Cresco

Changes In
IDALS-DSCWQ PERSONNEL

NAME	TITLE	NATURE OF ACTION	EFFECTIVE DATE	LOCATION
Dickerson, Linda	Conservation Assistant	Retired	3/31/17	Adair SWCD
Petersen, Wayne	Urban Conservationist	Retired	4/6/17	Des Moines
Schutz, Julie	Conservation Assistant	Resigned	4/12/17	Worth SWCD
Fitch, Diane	Conservation Assistant	Retired	5/1/17	Madison SWCD

GROVER DEPRIEST:
SRC TO TAKE MISSOURI POSITION

Iowa NRCS State Resource Conservationist Grover DePriest will be leaving Iowa in early June to become the new Assistant for Field Operations (AFO) in St. Joseph, MO. DePriest is a native Missourian, who still has a home and farm near Bethany. DePriest begins his new position in Missouri on June 11. DePriest started in Iowa in October 2014. Most recently, he served as the acting AFO in Atlantic.

At Right, the Iowa NRCS Leadership Team led by State Conservationist Kurt Simon (right) held a small celebration for DePriest at a May meeting in Storm Lake.